

96-38

Shine!

Making a Difference in our Corner of the World

1:9 I, John, your brother and companion in the suffering and kingdom and patient endurance that are ours in Jesus, was on the island of Patmos because of the word of God and the testimony of Jesus. 10 On the Lord's Day I was in the Spirit, and I heard behind me a loud voice like a trumpet, 11 which said: "Write on a scroll what you see and send it to the seven churches: to Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamum, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia and Laodicea."

12 I turned round to see the voice that was speaking to me. And when I turned I saw seven golden lampstands, 13 and among the lampstands was someone "like a son of man", dressed in a robe reaching down to his feet and with a golden sash round his chest. 14 His head and hair were white like wool, as white as snow, and his eyes were like blazing fire. 15 His feet were like bronze glowing in a furnace, and his voice was like the sound of rushing waters. 16 In his right hand he held seven stars, and out of his mouth came a sharp double-edged sword. His face was like the sun shining in all its brilliance.

17 When I saw him, I fell at his feet as though dead. Then he placed his right hand on me and said: "Do not be afraid. I am the First and the Last. 18 I am the Living One; I was dead, and behold I am alive for ever and ever! And I hold the keys of death and Hades.

19 "Write, therefore, what you have seen, what is now and what will take place later. 20 The mystery of the seven stars that you saw in my right hand and of the seven golden lampstands is this: The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches, and the seven lampstands are the seven churches." (NIV)

1. Our Dark World (vv.9-11)

A. *The Frustrating Reality*

B. *Its Dark Corners*

2. God's Solution (vv.12-20)

A. _____

B. _____

Discussion Questions

These questions are provided for your further study and application of today's message and to prepare you for participation in one of our small group studies. If you need more information about when and where CARE groups are meeting this week see the display in the lobby or call 503-255-1111.

1. Living for Christ in a "dark world" it not easy. John's faithfulness to proclaim the gospel in his world landed him on the island of Patmos, an exiled prisoner of Rome. Paul reminded us in Second Timothy 3:12 that it is to be expected that when we attempt to make a difference for Christ in this world that we are bound to run into trouble and opposition. If you have a history of attempting to be a faithful witness for Christ, explain some of the cost that has been associated with your fidelity to "the word of God and the testimony of Jesus" (v.9).

What encourages you to continue? How does God make the all the hassles seem worth it?

2. Some like to think of themselves as the exception to this rule. People from time to time will say that they don't believe that their walk with Christ has caused them any problems in this world. How would you respond to that? Why might people have this opinion?
3. God strategically placed his "lampstands" in cities throughout Asia Minor including the seven that are addressed in the book of Revelation (Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamum, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia and Laodicea). As we discover when we examine these first century cities, these were metropolitan areas in desperate need of the light of the gospel. They were also strategic because of their important position in the ancient world. Exponentially changing lives in these cities would have a huge impact on the entire Roman Empire. When you think about where God has placed our church why do you think he has chosen to place a lampstand here?

More specifically, when you think about bearing light as an individual Christian in your daily environment, why do you see this as God's strategic placement? (Think in terms of your particular office, company, family or neighborhood.)

4. What kind of passion, habits, disciplines or focus must be maintained by those of us who make up PCC if we are to keep our privileged position of being a light-bearing church among Christ's lampstands? How do we maintain that vital connection with the one that John describes in terms of light and even calls the "Light" in the Gospel of John?
5. What commitments or resolutions will you make as a result of this study in Revelation 1:9-20?